

WWF being Slaughtered

Just when it appeared pro wrestling's black eye was about to go away, the business caught a shiner in the other eye.

The World Wrestling Federation has been taken to task by the media for an attempt to exploit the Persian Gulf war. Four days after the war began, WWF President Vince McMahon decided to continue his previously planned story line, which was to make Bob Remus, who plays the character of Iraqi-sympathizer Sgt. Slaughter, his world champion.



**NO
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BARRED**

BY DAVE MELTZER
FOR THE NATIONAL

Major daily newspapers and pro wrestling newsletters have suggested letter-writing campaigns to the WWF and the sponsors of its syndicated television shows, as well as boycotts of WWF events.

The original idea was to have Slaughter face Hulk Hogan, whose recent USO tour further enhanced his image as a super-patriot. This Iraq-United States confrontation was designed to take place at Wrestlemania VII in Los Angeles on March 24.

Part of the plan has already backfired. Because of security concerns and a lack of ticket sales, the WWF has been forced to move the event from the Los Angeles Coliseum to the Los Angeles Sports Arena. The WWF had hoped to draw a record 100,000 fans, but will have to settle for 15,000.

The WWF is struggling on television, too. A rare prime-time special Feb. 1 on NBC earned a 6.7 rating, an 11 share and the 74th spot in the prime-time standings for the week. It was the worst showing of any WWF event in the promotion's six years on NBC, most of which have been spent in the late-night spot on Saturdays.

Clearly, the Sgt. Slaughter escapade has soured the public on pro wrestling. That's unfortunate, because much of the pro wrestling world doesn't condone the Iraq-U.S. angle. But the WWF is the largest promotion and therefore the most visible.

Today, the WWF is just four words away from healing all of pro wrestling's wounds — "We made a mistake."

ETC: The injury to **Pat Tanaka** of the Orient Express tag team, reported last week as a broken leg, was actually a blown-out knee. Tanaka returned to action this past week. . . . **Randy Savage's** thumb injury was more severe than originally let on. Savage underwent surgery Jan. 30 and had two pins placed in his thumb. He's not expected back until around Wrestlemania VII. As of this weekend, Savage was still being advertised for the WWF's house-show tours for nightly matches with **Ultimate Warrior**. Those matches will be changed to Warrior vs. **Sgt. Slaughter**. Matches advertised as Slaughter vs. **Jim Duggan**, the past few weeks have been changed to Duggan vs. **General Adnan**. . . . **Michael Wall Street** has left WCW over a contract dispute. He's expected to wind up either in the WWF or Japan. . . . New to WCW are **Big Josh** (Matt Borne playing a **Hillbilly Jim**-like role) and **Dustin Rhodes**, Dusty's son.

Chad

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